

for its importance as the habitat of the Bengal florican *Eupodotis bengalensis*, white-winged wood duck *Cairina scutulata*, tiger *Panthera tigris*, elephant *Elephas maximus*, wild buffalo *Bubalus arnee* and as an important flyway of migratory waterfowl including the common crane *Grus grus* (Choudhury, 1996). This proposed protected area, along with the existing Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary, will help protect the

majority of the gaur population of Dibang Valley. The protection measures in Mehao, however, need to be strengthened as they are inadequate at present.

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5. LESSER FRIGATE BIRD, *FREGATA MINOR ALDABRENSIS* MATHEWS
ON THE KERALA COAST

The lesser frigate bird breeds on the Indian Ocean Island, Aldabra (10° S lat. 45° E long. approx.) and on Seychelles (5° S lat. 55° E long). It is reported as a rare straggler during the monsoon in India (Ali and Ripley, 1968 HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, Vol. I p. 48). The BNHS collection has a male bird, collected on 24.vi.1927 by L.A. Lampard, from Quilon, Kerala. There are two female specimens from Sri Lanka, one in the Colombo Museum and the other in the British Museum.

On August 9, 1997 one bird was collected (found exhausted, died later) from Kannur in Kerala by C. Sashikumar and sent to BNHS. It is an adult female.

Measurement of the specimens in mm:

	Wing	Bill from feathers	Middle toe	Tail
Male	520 (IH 585-603)	100.5 116-130	50, 50.5 48-57	388 392-410
Female	620 (IH 605-621)	110 130-150	52.5, 53.5 48-57	435 395-430

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6. POND HERON IN PIN VALLEY NATIONAL PARK, SPITI, HIMACHAL PRADESH

The Indian pond heron or paddy bird (*Ardeola grayii grayii* Sykes) has been recorded

up to an altitude of 2150 m in the Nilgiris, and to about 1500 m in Kashmir and Nepal (Ali and

Ripley 1983). This species did not figure among the 93 confirmed species and 4 probable species that Koelz (1937) recorded for the entire Spiti area.

We wish to record an altitudinal extension of this species, one individual of which was observed in August 1995, at an altitude of 4050 m, in Pin Valley National Park, in the Trans-Himalayan Spiti region of Himachal Pradesh. The bird was seen in the vicinity of a riverine patch of willow (*Salix* sp.) in the Chohyam area of the National Park. Local people also did not

recollect having seen such a bird before. The species is not a migrant, and it is therefore improbable that it landed in the area *en route*.

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7. THE PAINTED SPURFOWL *GALLOPERDIX LUNULATA* VALENCIENNES
 IN RANTHAMBHORE NATIONAL PARK, RAJASTHAN

In the *JBNHS* Vol. 93 No. 1, there is mention by Shantanu Kumar on the occurrence of the painted spurfowl in the Ramgarh Sanctuary of Bundi dist., Rajasthan, and by Ashok Kumar Sharma on the occurrence of this bird in the Jamwa Ramgarh Sanctuary in Jaipur dist., as also in the Ranthambhore National Park and its adjacent sanctuaries.

I have also watched a pair of painted spurfowl at close quarters and was able to take a number of photographs of them in the Ranthambhore National Park in 1989. However, this appears to be a disjointed occurrence of this bird and these adjacent protected areas may perhaps even hold a relict population of this spurfowl, since there are no reports of it in

southern Rajasthan or eastern Rajasthan, or even in the adjacent areas of Madhya Pradesh. The nearest population of this bird that I know of is in the Satpura National Park of Madhya Pradesh, below the Pachmarhi massif. It would be interesting to know whether any other sightings of the painted spurfowl have occurred in Rajasthan outside this 'belt' starting from Ramgarh Sanctuary in Bundi to the Kailadevi Sanctuary in Karauli dist., or in the forests of northwestern Madhya Pradesh.

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8. MORE ON THE LESSER FLORICAN *SYPHEOTIDES INDICA* AT ROLLAPADU
 WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, KURNOOL DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

The Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary (area: 6.14 km²), Kurnool dist., Andhra Pradesh was set up in 1982 to protect the great Indian bustard *Ardeotis nigriceps*. The Sanctuary consists of three grazing and disturbance free grassland plots

(called enclosures by the Forest Department), which are surrounded by grazing lands and crop fields of the villages that border it. However, due to demands from the local graziers, only the main enclosure (Enclosure-I: 320 ha) is well